

Europäisches Patentamt  
European Patent Office  
Office européen des brevets



(11) **EP 1 535 680 A1**

(12) **EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION**  
published in accordance with Art. 158(3) EPC

(43) Date of publication:  
**01.06.2005 Bulletin 2005/22**

(51) Int. Cl.7: **B23B 27/14, C23C 14/06**

(21) Application number: **03760920.3**

(86) International application number:  
**PCT/JP2003/007866**

(22) Date of filing: **20.06.2003**

(87) International publication number:  
**WO 2004/000494 (31.12.2003 Gazette 2004/01)**

(84) Designated Contracting States:  
**AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB GR  
HU IE IT LI LU MC NL PT RO SE SI SK TR**  
Designated Extension States:  
**AL LT LV MK**

(72) Inventors:  
• **TAKAOKA, H., Mitsubishi Materials Corp.**  
**Naka-cho, Naka-gu (JP)**  
• **NAKAMURA, eiji, Mitsubishi Materials Corp.**  
**Naka-cho, Naka-gun (JP)**

(30) Priority: **25.06.2002 JP 2002183768**  
**25.06.2002 JP 2002183772**

(74) Representative:  
**Gille Hrabal Struck Neidlein Prop Roos**  
**Patentanwälte**  
**Brucknerstrasse 20**  
**40593 Düsseldorf (DE)**

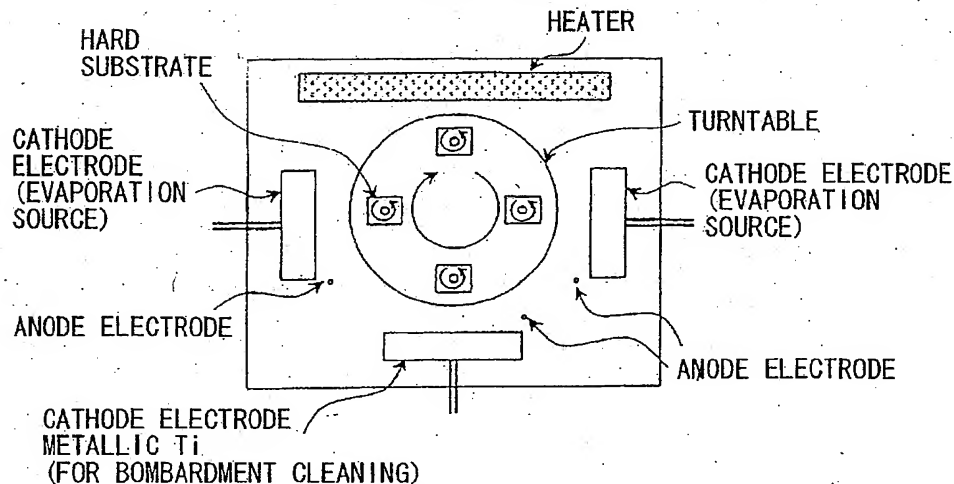
(71) Applicants:  
• **MITSUBISHI MATERIALS CORPORATION**  
**Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8117 (JP)**  
• **Mitsubishi Materials Kobe Tools Corporation**  
**Akashi-shi, Hyogo 674-0071 (JP)**

(54) **COATED CUTTING TOOL MEMBER**

(57) A coated cutting tool member exhibiting not only a superior wear resistance during a high speed cutting operation in which a significant amount of heat is generated, but also exhibit a superior chipping resistance even when such a cutting operation is performed under severe conditions, such as with a large depth of cut or a large feed. In the coated cutting tool member, a hard

coating layer of one of nitride compound and carbonitride compound containing Ti and Al is formed using a physical vapor deposition method at an average thickness of 1 to 10  $\mu\text{m}$ , and the hard coating layer includes Zr at an atomic ratio of 0.002 to 0.1, and at least one of Y and Ce at an atomic ratio of 0.0005 to 0.05 in a co-existence state.

**FIG. 1A**



average thickness of 1 to 15  $\mu\text{m}$  and is made of a nitride compound (hereinafter termed (Ti, Al, Zr)N) layer that includes Ti, Al, and Zr and satisfies a composition formula of  $(\text{Ti}_{1-(X+Y)}\text{Al}_X\text{Zr}_Y)\text{N}$  (where X indicates an atomic ratio of 0.45 to 0.65, and Y indicates an atomic ratio of 0.01 to 0.15), is formed on the surface of the aforementioned hard substrate using a physical vapor deposition method. It is also known that such a coated cutting tool is used in a high speed continuous cutting operation or in a high speed interrupted cutting operation for various kinds of steels and cast irons in which a significant amount of heat is generated because the aforementioned (Ti, Al, Zr)N layer forming the hard coating layer has a superior high temperature properties (high temperature hardness, heat resistance, and high temperature strength).

[0008] Moreover, it is also known that the aforementioned coated cutting tool is fabricated through a method in which the aforementioned hard substrate is mounted in, for example, an arc ion plating apparatus schematically shown in FIG. 2, which is a type of physical vapor deposition apparatus, an electric current of, for example, 90A is made to flow as an arc discharge between an anode electrode and a cathode electrode (an evaporation source) to which a Ti-Al-Zr alloy piece having a predetermined composition is attached under the conditions in which the inside of the apparatus is heated to a temperature of, for example, 400°C using a heater, a nitrogen gas as a reaction gas is introduced into the apparatus so as to prepare a reaction atmosphere at, for example, 2 Pa, and on the other hand, a DC bias voltage of -200 V is applied to the aforementioned hard substrate, so that a hard coating layer, which is made of a (Ti, Al, Zr) N layer is formed on the surface of the aforementioned hard substrate.

[0009] In recent years, cutting operation apparatuses tend to have significantly high performance, and on the other hand, it is strongly demanded that cutting operations be performed using lower power and less energy at lower cost. Accordingly, a coated cutting tool is strongly demanded, which exhibits not only a superior cutting performance during high speed cutting operations for various kinds of steels and cast irons in which a significant amount of heat is generated, but also a superior cutting performance during a cutting operation for various kinds of steels and cast irons under severe cutting conditions, such as with a large depth of cut or a large feed.

[0010] On the other hand, a coated cutting tool in which the aforementioned (Ti, Al)N layer, (Ti, Al, Si)N, or (Ti, Al, Zr)N is coated on a surface of a substrate exhibits a superior wear resistance when it is used for a cutting operation under a high speed condition; however, the cutting tool tends to easily chip and the tool life of the coated cutting tool tends to end in a relatively short period when it is used for high speed cutting operations under severe cutting conditions, such as with a large depth of cut or a large feed.

## DISCLOSURE OF INVENTION

[0011] In view of the above circumstances, the present inventors have conducted research to develop a coated cutting tool whose hard coating layer exhibits a superior chipping resistance during, in particular, high speed and severe cutting operations by focusing on the hard coating layer included in the aforementioned conventional coated cutting tools, and have obtained the following research results indicated by (a) and (b).

(a) The (Ti, Al, Zr)N layer which is formed, as a conventional hard coating layer, using the arc ion plating apparatus shown in FIG. 2 exhibits strength and toughness, high temperature hardness and heat resistance, and high temperature strength being uniform over the entire thickness of the layer; however, when a (Ti, Al, Zr)N layer is formed using an arc ion plating apparatus whose schematic plan view is shown in FIG. 1A and schematic front view is shown in FIG. 1B, i.e., using an arc ion plating apparatus in which a substrate supporting turntable is provided at the center thereof, a Ti-Al-Zr alloy piece, which corresponds to a Ti-Al-Zr alloy piece that is used for forming the aforementioned conventional (Ti, Al, Zr)N layer as a cathode electrode, and which includes Al at a relatively high ratio, and a Ti-Al-Zr alloy piece, which includes Al at a relatively low ratio, are arranged as cathode electrodes so as to oppose to each other while having the turntable therebetween, under the conditions in which a hard substrate is mounted on the turntable at a position radially away from the center axis of the turntable, the reaction atmosphere in the apparatus is made to be a nitrogen atmosphere, the turntable is rotated while the hard substrate itself is simultaneously rotated about the axis thereof in order to make the hard coating layer, which is formed by vapor deposition, to have a uniform thickness, and an arc discharge is generated between the two cathode electrodes and an anode electrode, because, on the surface of the hard substrate, maximum Al containing points are formed in a layer at moments at which the hard substrate, which is disposed at a position radially away from the center axis of the turntable, is located at a position closest to the cathode electrode of a Ti-Al-Zr alloy piece that includes Al at a relatively high ratio and minimum Al containing points are formed in the layer at moments at which the hard substrate is located at a position closest to the other cathode electrode of a Ti-Al-Zr alloy piece that includes Al at a relatively low ratio, the (Ti, Al, Zr)N layer exhibits a component composition profile in which the maximum Al containing points and the minimum Al containing points appear alternately and repeatedly at a predetermined interval in the thickness direction due to the rotation of the turntable, and the amount of contained Al component continuously varies from the maximum Al containing points to the minimum Al containing points and from the

will be explained below.

(A) Composition of the maximum Al containing points

Ti component contained in the (Ti, Al, Zr)N layer of the maximum Al containing points improves strength and toughness, and Al component improves high temperature hardness and heat resistance; therefore, the high temperature hardness and heat resistance are improved as the contained Al component is increased, and the coated cutting tool becomes more suitable for high speed cutting operations in which a significant amount of heat is generated; however, when the X value indicating the ratio (atomic ratio) of the Al component in the total amount of the Al, Ti, and Zr components is greater than 0.65, reduction in the strength and toughness of the layer is inevitable even though the minimum Al containing points having high strength and high toughness exist adjacent thereto, which makes the cutting tool to easily chip. On the other hand, when the X value is less than 0.45, it is difficult to ensure desired high temperature hardness and heat resistance. Accordingly, the X value was set from 0.45 to 0.65.

Moreover, Zr component improves high temperature strength. When the Y value indicating the ratio (atomic ratio) of the Zr component to the total amount of the Al, Ti, and Zr components is less than 0.01, the high temperature strength is not desirably improved, and when the Y value is greater than 0.15, the high temperature hardness and heat resistance tend to decrease. Accordingly, the Y value was set from 0.01 to 0.15.

(B) Composition of the minimum Al containing points

As explained above, the maximum Al containing points exhibit desired high temperature hardness, heat resistance, and high temperature strength; however, in contrast, exhibit insufficient strength and toughness for high speed cutting operations under severe cutting conditions, such as with a large depth of cut or a large feed, in which large mechanical impacts occur; therefore, in order to improve the strength and toughness of the maximum Al containing points, the minimum Al containing points, which include Ti at a high ratio and Al at a low ratio and thus exhibit high toughness, are alternately interposed in the thickness direction. Accordingly, when the X value indicating the ratio (atomic ratio) of the Al component to the total amount of the Al, Ti, and Zr components is greater than 0.40, desired superior strength and toughness cannot be ensured, and on the other hand, when the X value is less than 0.15, desired high temperature hardness and heat resistance cannot be ensured, which accelerates wear of the layer even though the maximum Al containing points having superior high temperature hardness and heat resistance exist adjacent thereto. Accordingly, the X value indicating the ratio of the Al component in the minimum Al containing points was set from 0.15 to 0.40.

Furthermore, Zr component is included in the minimum Al containing points in order to improve high temperature strength so that the cutting tool becomes suitable for high speed cutting operations in which a significant amount of heat is generated, as explained above. When the Y value is less than 0.01, high temperature strength is not desirably improved, and when the Y value is greater than 0.15, the high temperature hardness and heat resistance tend to decrease, which leads to accelerated wear. Accordingly, the Y value was set from 0.01 to 0.15.

(C) Distance between the maximum Al containing point and the minimum Al containing point

The distance between the maximum Al containing point and the minimum Al containing point was set from 0.01 to 0.1  $\mu\text{m}$  because when the distance is less than 0.01  $\mu\text{m}$ , it is difficult to form each of the points so as to have the aforementioned composition, and thus it is difficult to ensure further superior strength and toughness while ensuring desired high temperature hardness, heat resistance, and high temperature strength in the layer, and when the distance is greater than 0.1  $\mu\text{m}$ , weaknesses at each of the points exhibited during high speed cutting operations under severe cutting conditions, i.e., insufficient strength and toughness in the case of the maximum Al containing point, and insufficient high temperature hardness and heat resistance in the case of the minimum Al containing point, will locally appear in the layer, which may lead to chipping in the cutting edge or excessive wear.

(D) Overall average thickness of the hard coating layer

The average thickness was set from 1 to 15  $\mu\text{m}$  because when the thickness of the layer is less than 1  $\mu\text{m}$ , a desired wear resistance cannot be ensured, and in contrast, when the average thickness is greater than 15  $\mu\text{m}$ , the cutting edge tends to be chipped.

Furthermore, the present inventors have conducted research to develop a coated cutting tool whose hard coating layer has superior high temperature hardness and high temperature strength, and which exhibits a superior wear resistance and chipping resistance during, in particular, high speed and severe cutting operations, and have obtained the following research results indicated by (c) to (f).

(c) When a hard coating layer is formed with a nitride compound (hereinafter termed (Ti, Al, Zr, M)N) layer that includes Ti, Al, Zr, and at least one selected from Y and Ce, and satisfies a composition formula of  $(\text{Ti}_{1-(a+b+c)}\text{Al}_a\text{Zr}_b\text{M}_c)\text{N}$  (where M indicates at least one of Y and Ce, and among the composition ratios for the elements, "a" indicates

an atomic ratio of 0.05 to 0.25, "b" indicates an atomic ratio of 0.002 to 0.1, and "c" indicates an atomic ratio of 0.0005 to 0.05), and a distance between one of the maximum Al containing points and an adjacent one of the minimum Al containing points is from 0.01 to 0.1  $\mu\text{m}$ .

Next, the reason the structure of the hard coating layer of the present invention was limited as described above will be explained below.

(E) In the (Ti, Al, Zr, M)N layer, Ti component and Al component as primary composition components in a coexistence state with each other contribute to enhancing high temperature hardness and oxidation resistance of the coating layer; however, when the Al component in the coating layer is less than 0.30, both high temperature hardness and oxidation resistance tend to decrease. In this case, superior high temperature hardness can be obtained by adding Y component and/or Ce component in a coexistence state, and decrease in oxidation resistance can be prevented by adding Zr component in a coexistence state. However, when the Al component in the coating layer is less than 0.05, although high temperature hardness can be maintained by coexistence of Y component and/or Ce component, desired oxidation resistance cannot be ensured even with the Zr component in a coexistence state. On the other hand, when the Al component in the coating layer is more than 0.60, density of grain boundary in the coating composition becomes excessively high due to coexistence effects of the Y component and/or Ce component, and oxidation rapidly progresses in an intergranular region; therefore, the ratio of the Al component is set from 0.05 to 0.60, and preferably, from 0.30 to 0.50.

Moreover, Zr component, which is also a composition component, prevents oxidation of the coating layer in a coexistence state at a ratio depending on the composition ratio of the Al component, so that degradation of properties of the surface of the hard coating due to oxidation is prevented, and superior wear resistance is maintained for a long term; however, when the Zr component is less than 0.002, oxidation resistance cannot be desirably improved. On the other hand, because nitride compound of Zr itself does not have superior high temperature hardness, when the Zr component is more than 0.1 in an atomic ratio with respect to the entire metal components, high temperature hardness of the layer tends to decrease, and it is difficult to ensure high temperature hardness that is required during high speed cutting operations. Accordingly, the ratio of the Zr component is set from 0.002 to 0.1, and preferably, from 0.005 to 0.05.

Furthermore, Y component and/or Ce component, which are also a composition component, is added in order to enhance high temperature hardness of the (Ti, Al, Zr)N layer in a coexistence state with the Ti component and Al component at a predetermined ratio; however, when the Y component and/or Ce component are less than 0.0005, high temperature hardness cannot be desirably improved. On the other hand, because nitride compound of Y and/or Ce itself does not have superior high temperature hardness, when the Y component and/or Ce component are more than 0.05 in an atomic ratio with respect to the entire metal components, high temperature hardness of the (Ti, Al, Zr, M)N layer tends to decrease, and it is difficult to ensure high temperature hardness that is required during high speed cutting operations, which leads to accelerated wear of the cutting tool. Accordingly, the ratio of the Y component and/or Ce component is set from 0.0005 to 0.05, and preferably, from 0.001 to 0.02.

#### (F) Composition of the maximum Al containing points

Ti component contained in the (Ti, Al, Zr, M)N layer of the maximum Al containing points improves strength and toughness, and Al component improves high temperature hardness and oxidation resistance of the coating layer in a coexistence state with the Ti component; therefore, the high temperature hardness and oxidation resistance are improved as the contained Al component is increased, and the coated cutting tool becomes more suitable for high speed and severe cutting operations in which a significant amount of heat is generated; however, as explained above, when the "a" value indicating the ratio (atomic ratio) of the Al component in the total amount of the metal elements is greater than 0.60, density of grain boundary in the coating composition becomes excessively high due to coexistence effects of the Y component and/or Ce component, and oxidation rapidly progresses in an intergranular region. On the other hand, the maximum Al containing points should be given extremely superior high temperature hardness and oxidation resistance in consideration of coexistence with the minimum Al containing points which have high strength and high toughness but have relatively inferior high temperature hardness and oxidation resistance. Accordingly, the "a" value was set from 0.40 to 0.60.

#### (G) Composition of the minimum Al containing points

As explained above, the maximum Al containing points exhibit desired high temperature hardness and oxidation resistance; however, in contrast, exhibit insufficient strength and toughness for cutting operations under severe cutting conditions, such as with a large depth of cut or a large feed, in which large mechanical impacts occur; therefore, in order to improve the strength and toughness of the maximum Al containing points, the minimum Al containing points, which include Ti at a high ratio and Al at a low ratio and thus exhibit high toughness, are alternately interposed in the thickness direction. Accordingly, when the "a" value indicating the ratio (atomic ratio) of the metal elements is greater than 0.25, desired superior strength and toughness

the turntable therebetween, and a metallic Ti piece for bombardment cleaning was also set. The inside of the apparatus was evacuated and was held at a vacuum at a pressure of 0.5 Pa or less, and the inside of the apparatus was heated to a temperature of 500°C using a heater. Then, a DC bias voltage of -1000 V was applied to the hard substrates which are turned while rotating on the turntable about the respective axes thereof, and an electric current of 100A was made flow as an arc discharge between the cathode electrode, i.e., the metallic Ti piece, and an anode electrode, so that the surfaces of the hard substrates were subjected to Ti bombardment cleaning. Next, a nitrogen gas, as a reaction gas, was introduced into the apparatus so as to prepare a reaction atmosphere at a pressure of 3 Pa, a DC bias voltage of -30 V was applied to the hard substrates which are turned while rotating on the turntable about the respective axes thereof, and an electric current of 150A was made to flow as an arc discharge between the cathode electrodes (the Ti-Al-Zr alloy piece for forming the maximum Al containing points and the Ti-Al-Zr alloy piece for forming the minimum Al containing points) and the anode electrodes, respectively, so that a hard coating layer, which had component composition profile in which the maximum Al containing points and the minimum Al containing points having a designated composition shown in TABLES 3 and 4 appear alternately and repeatedly at a designated interval also shown in TABLES 3 and 4 in the thickness direction, and the amount of contained Al component continuously varies from the maximum Al containing points to the minimum Al containing points and from the minimum Al containing points to the maximum Al containing points, and which had a designated overall layer thickness also shown in TABLES 3 and 4, was formed, by a vapor deposition method, on the surface of each of the hard substrates, and thereby surface-coated hard metal inserts 1A to 10A and 1B to 6B of the present invention (hereinafter referred to as coated inserts of the present invention), as the coated cutting tools of the present invention, were fabricated.

**[0017]** For the purpose of comparison, the hard substrates A-1 to A-10 and B-1 to B-6 were subjected to ultrasonic cleaning in acetone, were dried, and were mounted in a conventional arc ion plating apparatus shown in FIG. 2. In the arc ion plating apparatus, a Ti-Al-Zr alloy piece having various compositions was set as a cathode electrode (evaporation source), a metallic Ti piece for bombardment cleaning was also set, the inside of the apparatus was evacuated and was held at a vacuum at a pressure of 0.5 Pa or less, and the inside of the apparatus was heated to a temperature of 400°C using a heater. Then, a DC bias voltage of -1000 V was applied to the hard substrates, and an electric current of 90A was made flow as an arc discharge between the cathode electrode, i.e., the metallic Ti piece, and an anode electrode, so that the surfaces of the hard substrates were subjected to Ti bombardment cleaning. Next, a nitrogen gas, as a reaction gas, was introduced into the apparatus so as to prepare a reaction atmosphere at a pressure of 2 Pa, the bias voltage applied to the hard substrates was decreased to -200 V, and an electric current was made to flow as an arc discharge between the cathode electrode and the anode electrode so that a hard coating layer, which had a designated composition and a designated layer thickness shown in TABLES 5 and 6, and which included a (Ti, Al, Zr)N layer in which composition was substantially constant in the direction of the layer thickness, was formed, by a vapor deposition method, on the surface of each of the hard substrates A-1 to A-10 and B-1 to B-6, and thereby conventional surface-coated hard metal inserts 1a to 10a and 1b to 6b (hereinafter referred to as conventional coated inserts), as conventional coated cutting tools, were fabricated.

**[0018]** Next, the coated inserts 1A to 10A and 1B to 6B of the present invention and the conventional coated inserts 1a to 10a and 1b to 6b were subjected to cutting tests by attaching each of them to a tip portion of a cutting tool made of tool steel using a fixing bridge and a screw. The detailed test conditions were set as follows:

with regard to high-speed, dry, and continuous cutting tests with a large depth of cut in which workpieces of alloy steel were machined,  
workpiece: a round bar of SNCM439 defined in the JIS,  
cutting speed: 300 m/min,  
depth of cut: 5.5 mm,  
feed: 0.15 mm/rev,  
time: 5 min;  
with regard to high-speed, dry, and interrupted cutting tests with a large feed in which workpieces of alloy steel were machined,  
workpiece: a round bar with four evenly distributed longitudinal grooves made of SCM440 defined in the JIS,  
cutting speed: 300 m/min,  
depth of cut: 1.6 mm,  
feed: 0.5 mm/rev,  
time: 5 min; and  
with regard to high-speed, dry, and continuous cutting tests with a large depth of cut in which workpieces of cast iron were machined,  
workpiece: a round bar made of FC300 defined in the JIS,  
cutting speed: 320 m/min,  
depth of cut: 5.5 mm,

TABLE 3

Classification	Symbols of substrate	Hard coating layer										Designated overall layer thickness (μm)
		Maximum Al containing points	Minimum Al containing points	Designated composition (atomic ratio)				Designated distance between two points (μm)				
				Designated composition (atomic ratio)								
				Ti	Al	Zr	N		Ti	Al	Zr	
1A	A-1	0.45	0.45	0.10	1.00	0.60	0.30	0.10	1.00	0.01	5	
2A	A-2	0.35	0.50	0.15	1.00	0.74	0.25	0.01	1.00	0.03	9	
3A	A-3	0.40	0.55	0.05	1.00	0.75	0.20	0.15	1.00	0.05	1	
4A	A-4	0.30	0.60	0.10	1.00	0.80	0.15	0.05	1.00	0.07	11	
5A	A-5	0.34	0.65	0.01	1.00	0.70	0.20	0.10	1.00	0.09	6	
6A	A-6	0.50	0.45	0.05	1.00	0.64	0.35	0.01	1.00	0.02	13	
7A	A-7	0.40	0.50	0.10	1.00	0.45	0.40	0.15	1.00	0.04	3	
8A	A-8	0.30	0.55	0.15	1.00	0.70	0.25	0.05	1.00	0.06	15	
9A	A-9	0.39	0.60	0.01	1.00	0.75	0.15	0.10	1.00	0.08	4	
10A	A-10	0.30	0.65	0.05	1.00	0.65	0.30	0.05	1.00	0.10	7	

Coated  
insert  
of the  
present  
invention

TABLE 5

			Hard coating layer				
Classification		Symbols of substrate		Designated composition (atomic ratio)			Designated layer thickness (μm)
			Ti	Al	Zr	N	
Conventional coated insert	1a	A-1	0.45	0.45	0.10	1.00	5
	2a	A-2	0.35	0.50	0.15	1.00	9
	3a	A-3	0.40	0.55	0.05	1.00	1
	4a	A-4	0.30	0.60	0.10	1.00	11
	5a	A-5	0.34	0.65	0.01	1.00	6
	6a	A-6	0.50	0.45	0.05	1.00	13
	7a	A-7	0.40	0.50	0.10	1.00	3
	8a	A-8	0.30	0.55	0.15	1.00	15
	9a	A-9	0.39	0.60	0.01	1.00	4
	10a	A-10	0.30	0.65	0.05	1.00	7

TABLE 6

			Hard coating layer				
Classification		Symbols of substrate	Designated composition (atomic ratio)				Designated layer thickness (μm)
			Ti	Al	Zr	N	
Conventional coated insert	1b	B-1	0.44	0.55	0.01	1.00	15
	2b	B-2	0.30	0.65	0.05	1.00	8
	3b	B-3	0.45	0.45	0.10	1.00	6
	4b	B-4	0.35	0.50	0.15	1.00	10
	5b	B-5	0.30	0.60	0.10	1.00	1
	6b	B-6	0.40	0.55	0.05	1.00	4



## Example 2

**[0019]** Ingredient powders, i.e., medium coarse powder of WC having an average grain size of 5.5  $\mu\text{m}$ , fine powder of WC having an average grain size of 0.8  $\mu\text{m}$ , powder of TaC having an average grain size of 1.3  $\mu\text{m}$ , powder of NbC having an average grain size of 1.2  $\mu\text{m}$ , powder of ZrC having an average grain size of 1.2  $\mu\text{m}$ , powder of  $\text{Cr}_3\text{C}_2$  having an average grain size of 2.3  $\mu\text{m}$ , powder of VC having an average grain size of 1.5  $\mu\text{m}$ , powder of (Ti, W)C having an average grain size of 1.0  $\mu\text{m}$ , and powder of Co having an average grain size of 1.8  $\mu\text{m}$ , were prepared. The ingredient powders were blended according to the blending ratios shown in TABLE 8, were mixed in acetone after adding wax for 50 hours using a ball mill, were subjected to vacuum drying, and were compacted under a pressure of 100 MPa so as to obtain various green compacts having predetermined shapes. The green compacts were held in a vacuum of 6 Pa while increasing temperature from 1370°C to 1470°C at a temperature increasing rate of 7°C/min, were further held at this temperature for 1 hour, and were cooled in the a furnace so as to be sintered and so as to obtain sintered round bars for forming three types of hard substrates, each type having one of diameters of 8 mm, 13 mm, and 26 mm. The three types of hard substrates were subjected to grinding so as to obtain hard substrates (end mill) C-1 to C-8, each of which is a square type end mill having four cutting edges with a twist angle of 30°, the cutting edges thereof dimensionally defined by one of combinations of diameter and length (diameter $\times$ length), i.e., one of 6 mm $\times$ 13 mm, 10 mm $\times$ 22 mm, and 20 mm $\times$ 45 mm, as shown in TABLE 8.

**[0020]** Next, the hard substrates (end mill) C-1 to C-8 were subjected to ultrasonic cleaning in acetone, and then the hard substrates C-1 to C-8 were dried, and were mounted in the arc ion plating apparatus shown in FIGS. 1A and 1B, and then, under the same conditions as in Example 1, a hard coating layer, which had component composition profile in which the maximum Al containing points and the minimum Al containing points having a designated composition shown in TABLE 9 appear alternately and repeatedly at a designated interval also shown in TABLE 9 in the thickness direction, and the amount of contained Al component continuously varies from the maximum Al containing points to the minimum Al containing points and from the minimum Al containing points to the maximum Al containing points, and which had a designated overall layer thickness also shown in TABLE 9, was formed by a vapor deposition method, and thereby surface-coated hard metal end mills 1C to 8C of the present invention (hereinafter referred to as coated end mills of the present invention), as the coated cutting tools of the present invention, were fabricated.

**[0021]** For the purpose of comparison, the surfaces of the hard substrates (end mills) C-1 to C-8 were subjected to ultrasonic cleaning in acetone, and then the hard substrates C-1 to C-8 were dried, and were mounted in a conventional arc ion plating apparatus shown in FIG. 2. Under the same conditions as in Example 1, a hard coating layer, which had a designated composition and a designated layer thickness shown in TABLE 10, and which included a (Ti, Al, Zr) N layer in which composition was substantially constant in the direction of the layer thickness, was formed by a vapor deposition method, and thereby conventional surface-coated hard metal end mills 1c to 8c (hereinafter referred to as conventional coated end mills), as conventional coated cutting tools, were fabricated.

**[0022]** Next, among the coated end mills 1C to 8C of the present invention and the conventional coated end mills 1c to 8c, the coated end mills 1C to 3C of the present invention and the conventional coated end mills 1c to 3c were subjected to wet and high-speed side milling tests with a large depth of cut in which workpieces of cast iron were machined under the following conditions,  
workpiece: a plate of FC300 defined in the JIS having a plane size of 100 mm $\times$ 250 mm, and a thickness of 50 mm,  
cutting speed: 320 m/min,  
depth of cut in the axial direction: 10 mm, depth of cut in the radial direction: 1.8 mm, and  
table feed: 210 mm/min.

**[0023]** The coated end mills 4C to 6C of the present invention and the conventional coated end mills 4c to 6c were subjected to wet and high-speed side milling tests with a large depth of cut in which workpieces of alloy steel were machined under the following conditions,  
workpiece: a plate of SCM440 defined in the JIS having a plane size of 100 mm $\times$ 250 mm, and a thickness of 50 mm,  
cutting speed: 300 m/min,  
depth of cut in the axial direction: 18 mm,  
depth of cut in the radial direction: 3 mm, and  
table feed: 195 mm/min.

**[0024]** The coated end mills 7C and 8C of the present invention and the conventional coated end mills 7c and 8c were subjected to wet and high-speed side milling tests with a large depth of cut in which workpieces of alloy steel were machined under the following conditions,  
workpiece: a plate of SNCM439 defined in the JIS having a plane size of 100 mm $\times$ 250 mm, and a thickness of 50 mm,  
cutting speed: 290 m/min,  
depth of cut in the axial direction: 40 mm,  
depth of cut in the radial direction: 6 mm, and  
table feed: 100 mm/min.



TABLE 8

Classification	Blending ratio (wt%)							Diameter × length of cutting edge (mm)	
	Co	(Ti,W)C	TaC	NbC	ZrC	Cr <sub>3</sub> C <sub>2</sub>	VC		WC
C-1	12	-	-	-	-	0.8	-	Fine grain: Balance	6×13
C-2	10	-	-	-	-	0.4	0.4	Fine grain: Balance	6×13
C-3	8.5	10	10	7	-	-	-	Medium coarse grain: Balance	6×13
C-4	10	-	-	-	-	0.5	-	Fine grain: Balance	10×22
C-5	9	8	9	1	-	-	-	Medium coarse grain: Balance	10×22
C-6	6	-	1	-	-	-	-	Fine grain: Balance	10×22
C-7	11	-	-	-	-	1	-	Fine grain: Balance	20×45
C-8	8	5	1	5	5	-	-	Medium coarse grain: Balance	20×45

Substrate  
(end mill)

TABLE 10

Classification	Symbols of substrate	Hard coating layer				Designated layer thickness (μm)	Length of cut groove (m)	
		Designated composition (atomic ratio)						
		Ti	Al	Zr	N			
Conventional coated end mill	1c	C-1	0.30	0.65	0.05	1.00	1	The end of tool life at 36 m
	2c	C-2	0.35	0.55	0.10	1.00	3	The end of tool life at 42 m
	3c	C-3	0.40	0.45	0.15	1.00	4	The end of tool life at 45 m
	4c	C-4	0.39	0.60	0.01	1.00	6	The end of tool life at 23 m
	5c	C-5	0.35	0.55	0.10	1.00	8	The end of tool life at 22 m
	6c	C-6	0.45	0.50	0.05	1.00	10	The end of tool life at 18 m
	7c	C-7	0.35	0.60	0.05	1.00	12	The end of tool life at 15 m
	8c	C-8	0.40	0.50	0.10	1.00	15	The end of tool life at 11 m

(In the TABLE, the end of tool life was reached due to chipping at the cutting edge)

TABLE 11

Classification	Symbols substrate	Hard coating layer										Number of drilled holes	
		Maximum Al containing points		Minimum Al containing points				Designated distance between two points		Designated overall layer thickness ( $\mu\text{m}$ )			
		Designated composition (atomic ratio)		Designated composition (atomic ratio)									
		Ti	Al	Zr	N	Ti	Al		Zr		N		
Coated drill of the present invention	1D	D-1	0.30	0.55	0.15	1.00	0.60	0.35	0.05	1.00	0.03	4	1349
	2D	D-2	0.45	0.45	0.10	1.00	0.75	0.15	0.10	1.00	0.01	3	1184
	3D	D-3	0.34	0.65	0.01	1.00	0.55	0.30	0.15	1.00	0.08	1	903
	4D	D-4	0.40	0.55	0.05	1.00	0.59	0.40	0.01	1.00	0.06	6	1086
	5D	D-5	0.30	0.60	0.10	1.00	0.75	0.20	0.05	1.00	0.10	10	1435
	6D	D-6	0.35	0.50	0.15	1.00	0.65	0.25	0.10	1.00	0.02	8	1242
	7D	D-7	0.40	0.55	0.05	1.00	0.65	0.20	0.15	1.00	0.07	12	698
	8D	D-8	0.30	0.60	0.10	1.00	0.65	0.30	0.05	1.00	0.04	15	866

tools, i.e., in the conventional coated inserts 1a to 8a and 1b to 6b, in the conventional coated end mills 1c to 8c, in the conventional coated drills 1d to 8d, were analyzed using an Auger electron spectroscopic analyzer, and it was confirmed that the compositions were substantially the same as the designated compositions, respectively.

[0034] In addition, the distances between the maximum Al containing points and the minimum Al containing points, and the overall thicknesses of the hard coating layers of the coated cutting tools of the present invention, and the overall thicknesses of the hard coating layers of the conventional coated cutting tools were measured using a scanning electron microscope, and it was confirmed that the distances and thicknesses were substantially the same as the designated ones, respectively.

[0035] According to the results shown in TABLES 3 to 12, it is apparent that the coated cutting tools of the present invention, which include the hard coating layer having a component composition profile in which the maximum Al containing points, which exhibit desired high temperature hardness, heat resistance, and high temperature strength, and the minimum Al containing points, which exhibit relatively superior strength and toughness, appear alternately and repeatedly at a predetermined interval in a direction of thickness of the hard coating layer, and the amount of contained Al component continuously varies from the maximum Al containing points to the minimum Al containing points and from the minimum Al containing points to the maximum Al containing points, exhibit a superior chipping resistance during high speed cutting operations for various kinds of steels and cast irons under severe cutting conditions, such as with a large depth of cut or a large feed, in which large mechanical impacts occur, and in contrast, the conventional coated cutting tools, in which the hard coating layer is of the (Ti, Al, Zr)N layer in which composition is substantially constant in the direction of the layer thickness, exhibit chipping of the cutting edge and relatively short tool life during high speed cutting operations under severe cutting conditions due to insufficient strength and toughness of the hard coating layer.

#### Example 4

[0036] Ingredient powders, i.e., powders of WC, TiC, VC, TaC, NbC,  $Cr_3C_2$ , and Co, all of which have an average grain size in a range from 1 to 3  $\mu m$ , were prepared and mixed in accordance with blending ratios shown in TABLE 13. The ingredient powders were mixed under wet conditions using a ball mill for 48 hours, were dried, and were compacted under pressure of 100 MPa so as to form green compacts. The green compacts were held in a vacuum of 6 Pa at a temperature of 1420°C for 1 hour so as to be sintered. After sintering, a honing process, in which a radius is set to be 0.05, is applied to cutting edge portions of each of the sintered compacts so as to obtain hard substrates E-1 to E-10 of WC based hard metal, each of which had an insert shape defined as CNMG120412 in the ISO standard.

[0037] Moreover, ingredient powders, i.e., powders of TiCN (TiC/TiN=50/50 when expressed by weight ratio),  $Mo_2C$ , ZrC, NbC, TaC, WC, Co, and Ni, all of which had an average grain size in a range from 0.5 to 2  $\mu m$ , were prepared and mixed in accordance with blending ratios shown in TABLE 14. The ingredient powders were mixed under wet conditions using a ball mill for 72 hours, were dried, and were compacted under pressure of 100 MPa so as to form green compacts. The green compacts were held in a nitrogen atmosphere of 2 kPa at a temperature of 1520°C for 1 hour so as to be sintered. After sintering, a honing process, in which a radius is set to be 0.05, is applied to cutting edge portions of each of the sintered compacts so as to obtain hard substrates F-1 to F-6 of TiCN cemet, each of which had an insert shape defined as CNMG120412 in the ISO standard.

[0038] Furthermore, ingredient powders, i.e., powders of cubic boron nitride (hereinafter termed c-BN), titanium carbide (hereinafter termed TiC), titanium nitride (hereinafter termed TiN), titanium carbonitride (hereinafter termed TiCN), tungsten carbide (hereinafter termed WC), Al,  $Ti_3Al$  and  $TiAl_3$  which are powders of intermetallic compounds of Ti and Al, and aluminum oxide (termed  $Al_2O_3$ ), all of which have an average grain size in a range from 0.5 to 4  $\mu m$ , were prepared and mixed in accordance with blending ratios shown in TABLE 15. The ingredient powders were mixed under wet conditions using a ball mill for 72 hours, were dried, and were compacted under pressure of 100 MPa so as to form a green compact having a diameter of 50 mm and a thickness of 1.5 mm. The green compact was held in a vacuum at a pressure of 1 Pa at a predetermined temperature in a range from 900 to 1300°C for 30 minutes so as to obtain a pre-sintered compact for forming a cutting piece. The pre-sintered compact was superposed on a supporting piece of a WC based hard metal plate which was separately prepared and had a diameter of 50 mm and a thickness of 2 mm, and which has a composition in which 8 wt% of Co and WC as the balance were included, and then the pre-sintered compact with the supporting piece was inserted into a conventional ultra-high pressure sintering apparatus, and was held under normal sintering conditions, i.e., a pressure of 5 GPa, a temperature in a range from 1200 to 1400°C, and a retention time of 0.5 hours, so as to be sintered under ultra-high pressure conditions. After sintering, upper and lower faces of the sintered compact were ground using a diamond grinding wheel, and the sintered compact was cut into equilateral triangles having 3 mm sides using an arc discharge wire-cut method, and then each of the triangular sintered compacts was brazed to a brazing portion (a corner portion) of a WC based hard metal insert body, which has a shape defined in the CIS standard-TNGA160408 (an equilateral triangle having 16 mm sides and a thickness of 4.76 mm) and has a composition in which 5 wt% of Co, 5 wt% of TaC, and WC as the balance were included,

with regard to high-speed, dry, and continuous cutting tests in which workpieces of alloy steel were machined,  
 workpiece: a round bar of SCM440 defined in the JIS,  
 cutting speed: 400 m/min,  
 feed: 0.2 mm/rev,  
 depth of cut: 2 mm,  
 time: 5 min; and

with regard to dry and continuous cutting tests under high-speed and severe cutting conditions in which workpieces  
 of alloy steel were machined,  
 workpiece: a round bar of SCM440 defined in the JIS,  
 cutting speed: 400 m/min,  
 feed: 0.4 mm/rev,  
 depth of cut: 4 mm,  
 time: 5 min.

In each of the cutting tests, flank wear width of the cutting edge was measured. The test results are shown in TABLE 19.  
**[0043]** Moreover, the coated inserts 1F to 12F of the present invention and the conventional coated inserts 1f to 6f  
 were subjected to cutting tests. The detailed test conditions were set as follows:

with regard to high-speed, dry, and continuous cutting tests in which workpieces of alloy steel were machined,  
 workpiece: a round bar of SCM440 defined in the JIS,  
 cutting speed: 450 m/min,  
 feed: 0.2 mm/rev,  
 depth of cut: 0.5 mm,  
 time: 5 min; and

with regard to dry and continuous cutting tests under high-speed and severe cutting conditions in which workpieces  
 of alloy steel were machined,  
 workpiece: a round bar of SCM440 defined in the JIS,  
 cutting speed: 450 m/min,  
 feed: 0.3 mm/rev,  
 depth of cut: 1.5 mm,  
 time: 5 min.

In each of the cutting tests, flank wear width of the cutting edge was measured. The test results are shown in TABLE 20.  
**[0044]** Furthermore, the coated inserts 1G to 12G of the present invention and the conventional coated inserts 1g  
 to 6g were subjected to cutting tests. The detailed test conditions were set as follows:

with regard to high-speed, dry, and continuous cutting tests in which workpieces of hardened steel were machined,  
 workpiece: a round bar of cemented hardened steel SCM440 defined in the JIS (surface hardness: HRC60),  
 cutting speed: 400 m/min,  
 feed: 0.1 mm/rev,  
 depth of cut: 0.1 mm,  
 time: 5 min; and

with regard to dry and continuous cutting tests under high-speed and severe cutting  
 conditions in which workpieces of hardened steel were machined,  
 workpiece: a round bar of cemented hardened steel SCM440 defined in the JIS (surface hardness: HRC60),  
 cutting speed: 400 m/min,  
 feed: 0.2 mm/rev,  
 depth of cut: 0.2 mm,  
 time: 5 min.

In each of the cutting tests, flank wear width of the cutting edge was measured. The test results are shown in TABLE 21.

TABLE 16

			Hard coating layer					
Classification		Symbols of substrate	Designated composition (atomic ratio)					Designated layer thickness (μm)
			Al	Zr	Y	Ce	Ti	
Coated Insert of the invention	1E	E-1	0.45	0.020	0.0050	-	Balance	5
	2E	E-2	0.45	0.020	-	0.0050	Balance	5
	3E	E-3	0.20	0.020	0.0030	0.0030	Balance	5
	4E	E-4	0.50	0.040	0.0200	-	Balance	5
	5E	E-5	0.30	0.060	0.0010	-	Balance	5
	6E	E-6	0.40	0.100	0.0005	-	Balance	5
	7E	E-7	0.05	0.100	-	0.0005	Balance	5
	8E	E-8	0.30	0.002	0.0500	-	Balance	10
	9E	E-9	0.55	0.010	0.0030	-	Balance	5
	10E	E-10	0.10	0.030	-	0.0100	Balance	10
	1F	F-1	0.45	0.020	0.0050	-	Balance	3
	2F	F-2	0.45	0.020	-	0.0050	Balance	3
	3F	F-3	0.20	0.020	0.0030	0.0030	Balance	3
	4F	F-4	0.30	0.002	0.0500	-	Balance	3
	5F	F-5	0.55	0.010	0.0030	-	Balance	3
	6F	F-6	0.10	0.030	-	0.0100	Balance	5
	1G	G-1	0.45	0.020	0.0050	-	Balance	3
	2G	G-2	0.45	0.020	-	0.0050	Balance	3
	3G	G-3	0.20	0.020	0.0030	0.0030	Balance	3
	4G	G-4	0.30	0.002	0.0500	-	Balance	3
	5G	G-5	0.55	0.010	0.0030	-	Balance	3
	6G	G-6	0.10	0.030	-	0.0100	Balance	5

TABLE 17 (Continued)

Classification	Symbols of substrate	Maximum Al containing points Designated composition (atomic ratio)						Hard coating layer Minimum Al containing points Designated composition (atomic ratio)						Designated distance between two points (μm)	Designated overall layer thickness (μm)
		Al	Zr	Y	Ce	Ti	Al	Zr	Y	Ce	Ti				
Coated insert of the present invention	7F	F-1	0.45	0.020	0.0050	-	Balance	0.25	0.020	0.0050	-	Balance	0.08	3	
	8F	F-2	0.45	0.020	-	0.0050	Balance	0.25	0.020	-	0.0050	Balance	0.08	3	
	9F	F-3	0.40	0.020	0.0030	0.0030	Balance	0.15	0.020	0.0030	0.0030	Balance	0.08	3	
	10F	F-4	0.50	0.002	0.0500	-	Balance	0.15	0.002	0.0500	-	Balance	0.03	3	
	11F	F-5	0.60	0.010	0.0030	-	Balance	0.05	0.030	0.0100	-	Balance	0.05	3	
	12F	F-6	0.40	0.030	-	0.0100	Balance	0.10	0.030	-	0.0100	Balance	0.05	5	
	7G	G-1	0.45	0.020	0.0050	-	Balance	0.25	0.020	0.0050	-	Balance	0.08	3	
	8G	G-2	0.45	0.020	-	0.0050	Balance	0.25	0.020	-	0.0050	Balance	0.08	3	
	9G	G-3	0.40	0.020	0.0030	0.0030	Balance	0.15	0.020	0.0030	0.0030	Balance	0.08	3	
	10G	G-4	0.50	0.002	0.0500	-	Balance	0.15	0.002	0.0500	-	Balance	0.03	3	
	11G	G-5	0.60	0.010	0.0030	-	Balance	0.05	0.030	0.0100	-	Balance	0.05	3	
	12G	G-6	0.40	0.030	-	0.0100	Balance	0.10	0.030	-	0.0100	Balance	0.05	5	

Coated  
insert of  
the present  
invention



TABLE 18 (Continued)

Classification	Symbols of substrate	Blending ratio (wt%)										Designated layer thickness (μm)
		Ti	Al	Si	Y	Zr	V	Nb	Cr			
Conv. Coated insert	1f	F-1	0.40	0.60	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	
	2f	F-2	0.40	0.57	0.03	-	-	-	-	-	3	
	3f	F-3	0.45	0.45	0.10	-	-	-	-	-	3	
	4f	F-4	0.90	0.05	-	0.05	-	-	-	-	3	
	5f	F-5	0.68	0.30	-	0.02	-	-	-	-	3	
	6f	F-6	0.60	0.30	-	-	0.10	-	-	-	5	
	1g	G-1	0.55	0.45	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	
	2g	G-2	0.50	0.45	0.05	-	-	-	-	-	3	
	3g	G-3	0.45	0.45	0.10	-	-	-	-	-	3	
	4g	G-4	0.65	0.30	-	0.05	-	-	-	-	3	
	5g	G-5	0.84	0.15	-	0.01	-	-	-	-	3	
	6g	G-6	0.60	0.10	-	-	0.30	-	-	-	5	

TABLE 20

Classification	Flank wear width (mm)		Classification	Flank wear width (mm)	
	High speed cutting of alloy steel	High speed and severe cutting of alloy steel		High speed cutting of alloy steel	High speed and severe cutting of alloy steel
Coated insert of the invention	1F	0.23	Conv. Coated insert	1f	The end of tool life at 2.2 min.
	2F	0.24		2f	The end of tool life at 2.6 min.
	3F	0.25		3f	The end of tool life at 1.8 min.
	4F	0.23		4f	The end of tool life at 1.9 min.
	5F	0.25		5f	The end of tool life at 2.1 min.
	6F	0.26		6f	The end of tool life at 2.6 min.
	7F	0.27			
	8F	0.25			
	9F	0.25			
	10F	0.24			
	11F	0.25			
	12F	0.27			

mm, 10 mm×22 mm, and 20 mm×45 mm, as shown in TABLE 22.

[0046] Next, the hard substrates H-1 to H-8 were subjected to ultrasonic cleaning in acetone, and then the hard substrates H-1 to H-8 were dried, and were mounted in the conventional arc ion plating apparatus shown in FIG. 2, and then, under the same conditions as in Example 4, a hard coating layer of nitride compound, which had a designated composition of metallic elements and a designated layer thickness shown in TABLE 23, was formed on the surface of each of the hard substrates using a physical vapor deposition method, and thereby coated end mills 1H to 8H of the present invention, as the coated cutting tools of the present invention, were fabricated.

[0047] For the purpose of comparison, the hard substrates H-1 to H-8 were subjected to ultrasonic cleaning in acetone, and then the hard substrates H-1 to H-8 were dried, and were mounted in the conventional arc ion plating apparatus shown in FIG. 2, and then, under the same conditions as in Example 4, a hard coating layer of nitride compound, which had a designated composition of metallic elements and a designated layer thickness shown in TABLE 24, was formed on the surface of each of the hard substrates using a physical vapor deposition method, and thereby conventional coated end mills 1h to 8h, as conventional coated cutting tools, were fabricated.

[0048] Next, among the coated end mills 1H to 8H of the present invention and the conventional coated end mills 1h to 8h, the coated end mills 1H to 3H of the present invention and the conventional coated end mills 1h to 3h were subjected to wet and high-speed side milling tests in which workpieces of cast iron were machined (while using a water-miscible cutting fluid) under the following conditions,

workpiece: a plate of FC300 defined in the JIS having a plane size of 100 mm×250 mm, and a thickness of 50 mm, cutting speed: 250 m/min,

depth of cut in the axial direction: 6 mm,

depth of cut in the radial direction: 1 mm, and

table feed: 600 mm/min.

[0049] The coated end mills 4H to 6H of the present invention and the conventional coated end mills 4h to 6h were subjected to wet and high-speed side milling tests in which workpieces of alloy steel were machined (while using a water-miscible cutting fluid) under the following conditions,

workpiece: a plate of SCM440 defined in the JIS having a plane size of 100 mm×250 mm, and a thickness of 50 mm, cutting speed: 200 m/min,

depth of cut in the axial direction: 10 mm,

depth of cut in the radial direction: 2 mm, and

table feed: 300 mm/min.

[0050] The coated end mills 7H and 8H of the present invention and the conventional coated end mills 7h and 8h were subjected to wet and high-speed side milling tests in which workpieces of alloy steel were machined (while using a water-miscible cutting fluid) under the following conditions,

workpiece: a plate of SNCM439 defined in the JIS having a plane size of 100 mm×250 mm, and a thickness of 50 mm, cutting speed: 200 m/min,

depth of cut in the axial direction: 20 mm,

depth of cut in the radial direction: 3 mm, and

table feed: 150 mm/min.

[0051] In each of the wet side milling tests (in which a water-miscible cutting fluid was used), a milling operation was performed until flank wear width of the cutting edge portion reached 0.1 mm, which indicates the end of the tool life, and the length of cut groove was measured. The test results are shown in TABLES 23 and 24.

TABLE 23

Classification	Symbols of substrate	Hard coating layer					Designated layer thickness (μm)	Length of cut (m)
		Designated composition (atomic ratio)						
		Al	Zr	Y	Ce	Ti		
1H	H-1	0.45	0.020	0.0050	-	Balance	1	66
2H	H-2	0.45	0.020	-	0.0050	Balance	1	54
3H	H-3	0.20	0.020	0.0030	0.0030	Balance	1	69
4H	H-4	0.50	0.040	0.0200	-	Balance	3	60
5H	H-5	0.30	0.060	0.0010	-	Balance	3	54
6H	H-6	0.30	0.002	0.0500	-	Balance	3	57
7H	H-7	0.55	0.010	0.0030	-	Balance	3	51
8H	H-8	0.10	0.030	-	0.0100	Balance	3	60

Coated end  
mill of the  
invention

## Example 6

**[0052]** The three types of sintered round bars having diameters of 8 mm, 13 mm, or 26 mm, respectively, fabricated in Example 5 were subjected to grinding so as to obtain hard substrates 1-1 to 1-8 of WC based hard metal formed in a drill shape in which two cutting edges with a twist angle of 30° were provided, and in which fluted portion sizes (diameter×length) were set in one of 4 mm×13 mm, 8 mm×22 mm, and 16 mm×45 mm, as shown in FIG. 25.

**[0053]** Next, honing processes were applied to the cutting edges of the hard substrates 1-1 to 1-8, the hard substrates 1-1 to 1-8 were subjected to ultrasonic cleaning in acetone, were dried, and were mounted in the conventional arc ion plating apparatus shown in FIG. 2, and then, under the same conditions as in Example 4, a hard coating layer of nitride compound, which had a designated composition of metallic elements and a designated layer thickness shown in TABLE 26, was formed on the surface of each of the hard substrates using a physical vapor deposition method, and thereby coated drills 11 to 81 of the present invention, as the coated cutting tools of the present invention, were fabricated.

**[0054]** For the purpose of comparison, the hard substrates 1-1 to 1-8 were subjected to ultrasonic cleaning in acetone, and then the hard substrates 1-1 to 1-8 were dried, and were mounted in the conventional arc ion plating apparatus shown in FIG. 2, and then, under the same conditions as in Example 4, a hard coating layer of nitride compound, which had a designated composition of metallic elements and a designated layer thickness shown in TABLE 27, was formed on the surface of each of the hard substrates using a physical vapor deposition method, and thereby conventional coated drills 1i to 8i, as conventional coated cutting tools, were fabricated.

**[0055]** Next, among the coated drills 11 to 81 of the present invention and the conventional coated drills 1i to 8i, the coated drills 11 to 31 of the present invention and the conventional coated drills 1i to 3i were subjected to wet and high-speed drilling tests in which workpieces of cast iron were machined (while using a water-miscible cutting fluid) under the following conditions,

workpiece: a plate of FC300 defined in the JIS having a plane size of 100 mm×250 mm, and a thickness of 50 mm,

cutting speed: 150 m/min,

feed: 0.2 mm/rev, and

depth of hole: 8 mm.

**[0056]** The coated drills 41 to 61 of the present invention and the conventional coated drills 4i to 6i were subjected to wet and high-speed drilling tests in which workpieces of alloy steel were machined (while using a water-miscible cutting fluid) under the following conditions,

workpiece: a plate of SCM440 defined in the JIS having a plane size of 100 mm×250 mm, and a thickness of 50 mm,

cutting speed: 150 m/min,

feed: 0.2 mm/rev, and

depth of hole: 16 mm.

**[0057]** The coated hard metal drills 71 and 81 of the present invention and the conventional coated hard metal drills 7i and 8i were subjected to wet and high-speed drilling tests in which workpieces of alloy steel were machined (while using a water-miscible cutting fluid) under the following conditions,

workpiece: a plate of SNCM439 defined in the JIS having a plane size of 100 mm×250 mm, and a thickness of 50 mm,

cutting speed: 200 m/min,

feed: 0.3 mm/rev, and

depth of hole: 30 mm.

**[0058]** In each of the wet and high-speed drilling tests with a large depth of cut (in which a water-miscible cutting fluid was used), holes were formed until flank wear width of the cutting edge of the tip portion reached 0.3 mm, and the number of the holes was counted. The test results are shown in TABLES 26 and 27.

TABLE 26

Classification	Symbols of substrate	Hard coating layer						Number of drilled holes	
		Designated composition (atomic ratio)					Designated layer thickness (μm)		
		Al	Zr	Y	Ce	Ti			
	1I	I-1	0.45	0.020	0.0050	-	Balance	1	1050
	2I	I-2	0.45	0.020	-	0.0050	Balance	1	1150
	3I	I-3	0.20	0.020	0.0030	0.0030	Balance	1	1100
Coated end mill of the invention	4I	I-4	0.50	0.040	0.0200	-	Balance	3	750
	5I	I-5	0.30	0.060	0.0010	-	Balance	3	850
	6I	I-6	0.30	0.002	0.0500	-	Balance	3	800
	7I	I-7	0.55	0.010	0.0030	-	Balance	3	360
	8I	I-8	0.10	0.030	-	0.0100	Balance	3	340

Coated end  
mill of the  
invention

[0059] The compositions of the hard coating layers which were included in the coated cutting tools of the present invention, i.e., in the coated inserts 1E to 10E, 1F to 6F, and 1G to 6G of the present invention; in the coated end mills 1H to 8H of the present invention, and in the coated drills 1I to 8I of the present invention; the compositions of the hard coating layers which were included in the conventional coated cutting tools, i.e., in the conventional coated inserts 1e to 10e, 1f to 6f, and 1g to 6g, in the conventional coated end mills 1h to 8h, and in the conventional coated drills 1i to 8i; and the compositions of the maximum Al containing points and the minimum Al containing points of the hard coating layers which were included in the coated cutting tools of the present invention, i.e., in the coated inserts 11E to 20E, 7F to 12F, and 7G to 12G of the present invention, were analyzed using an Auger electron spectroscopic analyzer, and it was confirmed that the compositions were substantially the same as the designated compositions, respectively.

[0060] In addition, the distances between the maximum Al containing points and the minimum Al containing points, and the overall thicknesses of the hard coating layers of the coated cutting tools of the present invention, and the overall thicknesses of the hard coating layers of the conventional coated cutting tools were measured using a scanning electron microscope, and it was confirmed that the distances and thicknesses were substantially the same as the designated ones, respectively.

[0061] According to the results shown in TABLES 13 to 24, it is apparent that all of the coated inserts 11E to 20E, 7F to 12F, and 7G to 12G of the present invention, the coated end mills 1H to 8H of the present invention, and the coated drills 1I to 8I of the present invention exhibit superior wear resistance and have normal wear in the cutting edges during the cutting operations under high speed conditions, and, in addition, the coated inserts 11E to 20E, 7F to 12F, and 7G to 12G of the present invention exhibit superior cutting performance without having chipping even during the cutting operations under high speed and severe conditions. In contrast, it is apparent that the conventional coated inserts 1e to 10e, 1f to 6f, and 1g to 6g, the conventional coated end mills 1h to 8h, and the conventional coated drills 1i to 8i exhibit relatively short tool life due to insufficient wear resistance and toughness of the hard coating layer.

#### INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY

[0062] As explained above, because the coated cutting tools of the present invention exhibit a superior chipping resistance not only during high-speed cutting operations under normal conditions, but also during high-speed cutting operations, in particular, for various kinds of steels and cast irons under severe conditions, such as with a large depth of cut or a large feed, and exhibit a superior wear resistance for a long term, the coated cutting tools of the present invention can sufficiently meet the demands of lower power, less energy, and lower cost in cutting operations.

#### Claims

1. A coated cutting tool member whose hard coating layer exhibits a superior chipping resistance during a high speed and severe cutting operation, the coated cutting tool member comprising:

a hard substrate; and

a hard coating layer of a nitride compound containing Ti, Al, and Zr, which is formed on a surface of the hard substrate using a physical vapor deposition method at an overall average thickness of 1 to 15  $\mu\text{m}$ , wherein the hard coating layer has a component composition profile in which maximum Al containing points and minimum Al containing points appear alternately and repeatedly at a predetermined interval in a direction of thickness of the hard coating layer, and the amount of contained Al component continuously varies from the maximum Al containing points to the minimum Al containing points and from the minimum Al containing points to the maximum Al containing points,

the maximum Al containing points satisfy a composition formula of  $(\text{Ti}_{1-(X+Y)}\text{Al}_X\text{Zr}_Y)\text{N}$  (where X indicates an atomic ratio of 0.45 to 0.65, and Y indicates an atomic ratio of 0.01 to 0.15) and the minimum Al containing points satisfy a composition formula of  $(\text{Ti}_{1-(X+Y)}\text{Al}_X\text{Zr}_Y)\text{N}$  (where X indicates an atomic ratio of 0.15 to 0.40, and Y indicates an atomic ratio of 0.01 to 0.15), and

a distance between one of the maximum Al containing points and adjacent one of the minimum Al containing points is from 0.01 to 0.1  $\mu\text{m}$ .

2. A coated cutting tool member exhibiting a superior wear resistance, comprising:

a hard substrate; and

a hard coating layer of one of a nitride compound containing Ti and Al, and a carbonitride compound containing Ti and Al, which is formed on a surface of the hard substrate using a physical vapor deposition method at an overall average thickness of 1 to 10  $\mu\text{m}$ , wherein



FIG. 1A

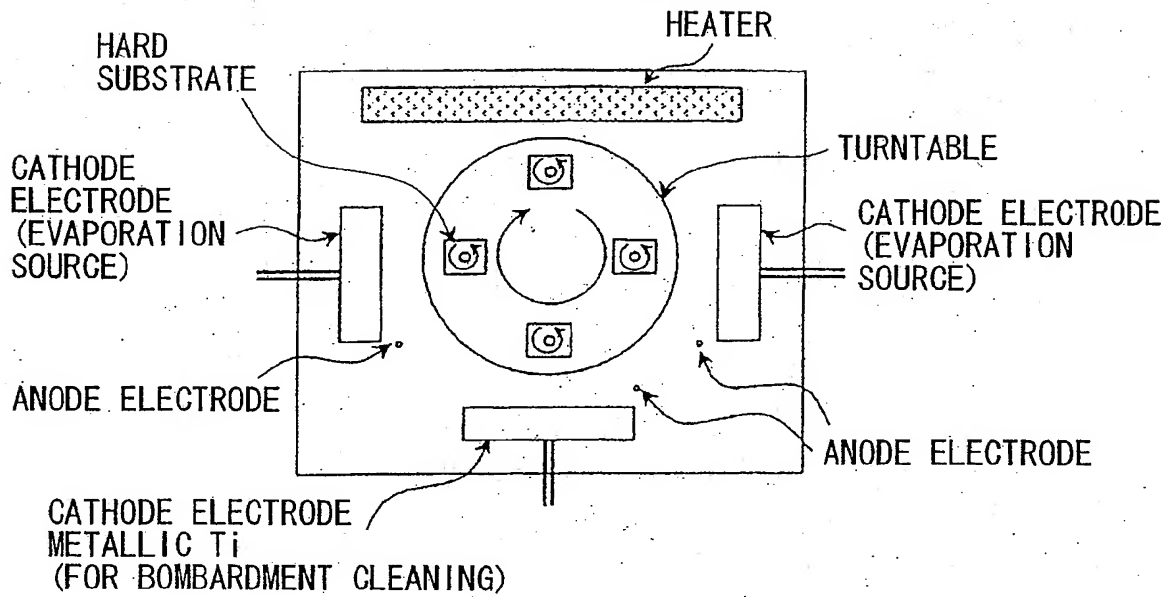
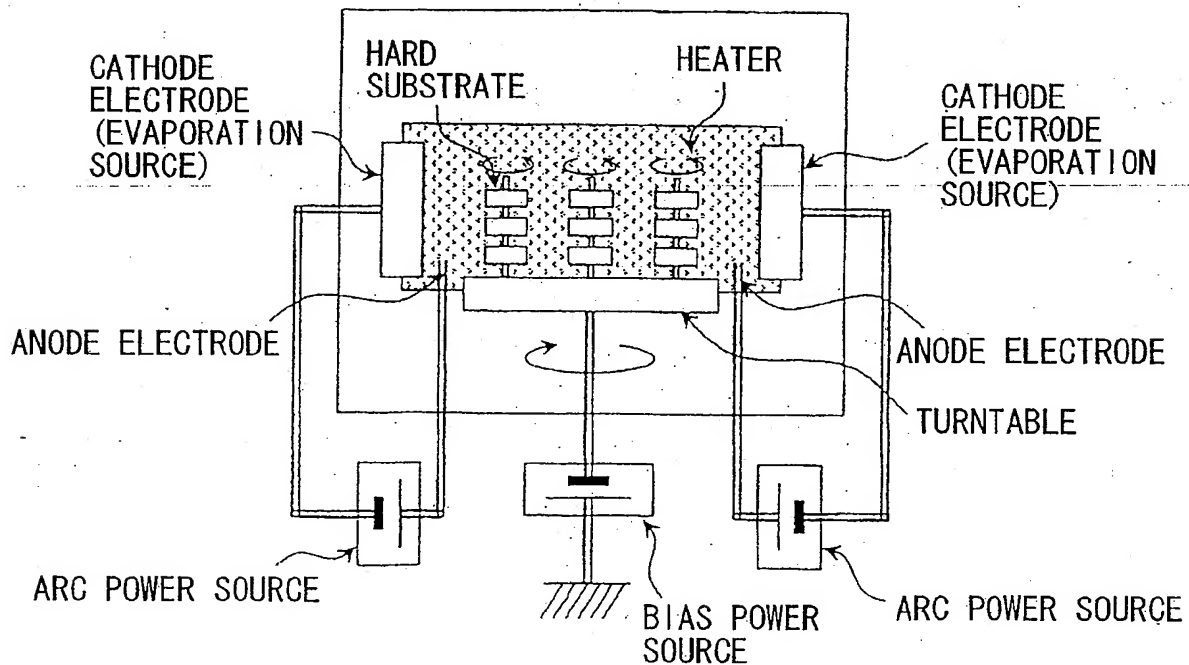


FIG. 1B



## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/JP03/07866

## A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

Int.Cl<sup>7</sup> B23B27/14, C23C14/06

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

## B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

Int.Cl<sup>7</sup> B23B27/14, C23C14/06

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Jitsuyo Shinan Koho	1922-1996	Jitsuyo Shinan Toroku Koho	1996-2003
Kokai Jitsuyo Shinan Koho	1971-2003	Toroku Jitsuyo Shinan Koho	1994-2003

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

## C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X Y	JP 9-323205 A (Hitachi Tool Engineering Ltd.), 16 December, 1997 (16.12.97), Claims 1, 3; Par. No. [0006] (Family: none)	1-7 8-11
Y	JP 7-97679 A (Sumitomo Electric Industries, Ltd.), 11 April, 1995 (11.04.95), Par. Nos. [0010], [0011], [0017] to [0021]; all drawings (Family: none)	1, 3-11
Y	JP 11-216601 A (OSG Corp.), 10 August, 1999 (10.08.99), Par. Nos. [0003] to [0005] (Family: none)	1, 3-11

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.
 ☐ See patent family annex.

\* Special categories of cited documents:

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"I"

later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X"

document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y"

document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&amp;"

document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search  
19 September, 2003 (19.09.03)Date of mailing of the international search report  
07 October, 2003 (07.10.03)Name and mailing address of the ISA/  
Japanese Patent Office

Authorized officer

Facsimile No.

Telephone No.

Form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet) (July 1998)

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/JP03/07866

**Box I Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)**

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☐ Claims Nos.:  
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:
2. ☐ Claims Nos.:  
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:
3. ☐ Claims Nos.:  
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

**Box II Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)**

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

The inventions according to claims 1 and 3 to 11 relate to a coated cutting tool member prepared by repeatedly coating a substrate alternately with coating layers obtained by incorporating Zr or the like into a composite nitride layer or a composite carbonitride layer of Ti and Al with various concentrations of the components.

The invention according to claim 2 to a coated cutting tool member prepared by coating a substrate with a coating layer obtained by only incorporating Zr and one or more of Y and Ce into a composite nitride layer or a composite carbonitride layer of Ti and Al.

1. ☐ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.
2. ☒ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.
3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
4. ☐ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

**Remark on Protest** ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.  
☐ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

Form PCT/ISA/210 (continuation of first sheet (1)) (July 1998)